

SIEC Briefing Paper Department of Corrections, McNeil Island Partnership with the City of Tacoma

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Description

- The Department of Corrections (DOC) is asking the SIEC for approval to acquire two additional frequencies (one channel pair) that will be used at a repeater site at the McNeil Island Special Commitment Center.
- DOC is also asking the SIEC for an endorsement to the 800 MHz NPSPAC region for approval to use ITAC-4 provisionally, as a secondary use channel (primary to be interoperable communications) for a period not to exceed six months.
- DOC is asking the SIEC for approval to allow the City of Tacoma to use the DOC tower located on McNeil Island in exchange for DOC's use of the City of Tacoma's radio network.

Recommendations to the Committee

The SIEC Advisory Work Group, the SIEC Frequency Management Work Group and staff join in recommending that the SIEC approve the following:

- Authorization to the DOC to apply for one additional channel pair of frequencies that will be used at their McNeil Island Special Commitment Center facility.
- Ask the SIEC (through its Chair) to endorse the use of provisional secondary use of ITAC-4, a NPSPAC mutual aid channel for a period not to exceed six months.
- Approve the DOC's partnership arrangement with the City of Tacoma that will allow the City of Tacoma to use DOC's tower in exchange for DOC's use of the City of Tacoma's radio network.

Status

- DOC has determined that they are in need of one additional channel pair for their repeater located at their McNeil Island location.
- DOC is asking the SIEC to endorse a request to the Region 43 NPSPAC Committee to allow them to use one interoperability channel for secondary use for a period of six months. This is a temporary solution until such time as the additional channel pair may be acquired.
- DOC has entered into conversations with the City of Tacoma to create a partnership agreement. This partnership will allow the City of Tacoma to use the DOC tower located at McNeil Island in exchange for DOC being allowed to use the City of Tacoma's radio network.

Background

The DOC is tasked with holding high-risk sex offenders in the state institutions. Once released from DOC custody, some of the individuals are civilly committed to the Department of Social and Health Services Special Commitment Center, adjacent to DOC facility. When the Special Commitment Center (SCC) was opened, DOC offered to assist the SCC when necessary in controlling the population and the use of the DOC radio system. The radio system that would be shared was operated by DOC, and was however, at capacity.

- As additional radios were added to the system, DOC had to decide if they wanted to increase the capacity of their system, or upgrade from a conventional to a trunked 800 MHz system. Based upon current needs and anticipated requirements, DOC is asking for one additional channel pair to be used on local repeater located at SCC, and interconnected with the McNeil Island system.
- Until this frequency and radio expansion takes place, it is necessary for DOC to have additional spectrum. As this is only a temporary request, DOC is asking the SIEC for its endorsement to request the temporary use of a channel that is designed as a mutual aid frequency. This request must be submitted to Region 43 NPSPAC for their approval. Use of this frequency will be secondary to the primary purpose of mutual aid and the request will terminate within six months.
- A study commissioned by DOC and Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) recommends the installation of the City of Tacoma radio system instead of expanding the current MICC radio system as it will afford expanded coverage and promote interoperability. Installation of this system will allow the DSHS Special Commitment Center to have effective off island coverage and city of Tacoma would meet their coverage needs. DOC would not be able to immediately utilize this system, as equipment replacement would be required. However, DOC feels the proposed partnership promotes interoperability and in the long-term for community safety.

The City of Tacoma has and maintains a radio system. The radio system that Tacoma uses is an 800 MHz trunked system. The City of Tacoma is in need of an additional antenna site that would provide coverage from south and east of McNeil Island. While a tower site has been identified, a review of coverage maps determined that the MICC Tower provided more desirable radio coverage for the city of Tacoma system.

To accommodate both DOC and the City of Tacoma an arrangement is being brokered. In exchange for the antenna site located on McNeil Island ("owned" by DOC) the City of Tacoma would allow DOC and SCC onto the City of Tacoma network. Specifics are being explored and evaluated, and DOC requests approval from the SIEC to enter into this partnership should a mutually beneficial agreement be reached. It is anticipated this partnership would provide savings to both DOC and the City of Tacoma. Additionally, DOC and SCC would see expanded coverage that will assist Corrections and DSHS staff, which typically had no easy way to communicate with McNeil Island or the local police department. This would also add a resource for Community Corrections Officers tasked with supervising high-risk offenders residing in the community.

It is anticipated that DOC will have more current and complete information for the consideration of the SIEC at the meeting on September 22, 2004.